

# **TESTIMONY ON HB 6422**

## **High School Graduation Standards**

Alicia M. Roy, Ed.D.  
Superintendent, New Fairfield Schools

Ensuring student success by allowing high schools to award credit based on mastery of standards is a provision of HB 6422, a bill that would help Connecticut high schools graduate students who have been fully engaged in their learning and graduate college and career ready.

Students in high school today earn credit and graduate based on their collection of Carnegie units, awarded for seat time in the classroom. By attending school and earning a minimum grade, students can graduate in the current system. This approach to education is the current system, but it is not good enough for our students today.

Today's learning can occur everywhere and at anytime. The current system of awarding Carnegie units does not acknowledge the way learning occurs. New Fairfield is working with eight other schools to create standards students would master before graduating. As a member of the League of Innovative Schools and the New England Secondary School Consortium, we believe in creating personalized learning opportunities and authentic experiences for students to demonstrate their learning. Students would not be able to graduate until they have demonstrated that all standards have been met. They will need to continue to work on skills until they can demonstrate their ability to apply the skills or knowledge they have mastered.

Creating engaged students who take ownership and responsibility for their learning with the assistance of their teachers as learning coaches would be possible with HB 6358. Critical thinking and problem solving skills are not encouraged through the current system. Students are driven by earning the A, not necessarily by mastering the content. In a system of mastering standards, students who have shown mastery can continue their learning and will not be bored. Teachers will be successful with more students as they will have the flexibility needed to deliver the content according to the learning styles and needs of the students. Learning, not time, needs to be constant.

Now is the time for Connecticut schools to have the opportunity to create a new system for learning, a system that would provide high-quality learning experiences via platforms that are flexible and adaptable to the individual needs of the students. Students' achievement goals would require the demonstration of success of knowledge and skills needed in a globally oriented world. Students would own their learning and be a vital part of shaping their problem-based learning opportunities. They will have to analyze and synthesize information, apply it to essential skills, and transfer the learning across content areas, ensuring that all will graduate prepared for college and careers. If we are to reach these world-class standards, we need the flexibility allowed in HB 6422.